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every variety of so-called constitutions, and even where not successfully employed, no ill effects have ever been observed thereafter.

I always keep on hand a quantity of this medicinal agent—in the form of a tincture or dried plant, and when I can obtain enough of it, the expressed juice. I will merely mention a case of ophthalmia cured incidentally by *Monotropa uniflora*. Fourteen years ago, it was in the early part of July, I went woodcock-shooting with two friends, near Hackensack, N. J., and while taking some luncheon in a beech grove along the course of Saddle River, found a large patch of ground literally covered with *Monotropa uniflora* in full bloom. I have never met with such another “find” of this plant in all of my frequent rambles and excursions made in search of it. It covered a space some five feet wide by nine feet long, a beautiful sight of snow-white stems and nodding flowers. Being in need of some just then, I proceeded to fill my game-bag, and to the question, what it was used for, answered “good for sore eyes,” little thinking that the party addressed was suffering from a chronic inflammation of the eye lids, the edges of which had a very fiery red appearance. No sooner said, than he proceeded to take in his game-bag a supply also, and he made a very good use of it, as I ascertained afterwards. His inflamed lids were entirely cured in four weeks’ time and has had no further trouble since, by applying the fresh juice of the stems he obtained while it lasted.

Now in view of all this, and coupling it with the fact, that in physical properties the *Monotropa* abounds in a mucilaginous and astringent property, either of which are quite innocuous, may it not have been possible that the young lady in question, who was supposed to have been poisoned by *Monotropa uniflora*, had come in contact with some of the far-spreading roots of *Rhus Toxicodendron*, in the attempt to lift or pluck the stem as close to the ground as possible? I have been poisoned in just such a manner myself, while collecting *Monotropa* as well as other plants. Now I have a wholesome fear of *Poison Rhus*, and manage to get poisoned with it anyhow several times every year—hardly ever by its leaves which I recognize at a long distance, never by its exhalations, but generally by coming in contact with its twining stems, or roots and fibrils so difficult to distinguish when underground or covered by decayed vegetable matter. The eruption following contact with *Poison Rhus*, when not accompanied by any swelling, only lasts a few days, just like that case referred to. I have often inoculated myself and others with *Poison Rhus* in order to antidote its disagreeable effects with different remedies, and have seen its action in every conceivable appearance.

But I am digressing from my subject. May it not have been possible that a few fibrils of *Rhus* were adherent to the scales or bracts of the stem, or passing through the matted fibrous rootlets of the *Monotropa*, which in handling could not have been avoided of being touched? May that lady not, therefore, have been an unsuspecting victim to the lurking poison of *Rhus Toxicodendron*?—RICHARD E. KUNZE, M. D.

FERNS OF KENTUCKY.—I have received from Mr. John Williamson, of Louisville, Ky., who is preparing a “Hand-Book” of the native ferns of that State, some etchings that have given to me, and others, so much pleasure, and which augur so well for the success of his work, that I am tempted to offer this notice in advance of publication.

These etchings are most charmingly and faithfully executed, and the graceful and successful management of the larger species in adapting them to the limited space they will occupy in the plates shows that Mr. Williamson possesses the true artistic feeling, and enters fully into the poetic nature of the beautiful plants that he is aiming to describe and portray.

The small species—especially *Trichomanes radicans*—have all the ease and natural grace of the ferns themselves, while the extra plates giving the mode of the fructification of each genus are very clearly and strongly depicted, and materially increase the value of the work as a whole.

I am unable to speak of the text of Mr. Williamson's work at the present time, but the collection of fifty-nine etchings with which he proposes to illustrate his book alone would be worth more than the price of the book to any fern student. I am delighted with them, and if the whole work is completed in the manner in which the etchings now in my possession indicate that it will be, then it cannot fail to prove a most valuable addition to our fern literature.

That the study of our native ferns is on the increase, and likely to become as popular as the same study is in England, where valuable and costly works on the subject have multiplied, the very gratifying success with which Prof. Eaton's splendid work on the "Ferns of North America" is meeting sufficiently indicates.

There is, therefore, ample room for such special hand books as Mr. Williamson's is intended to be, and I sincerely trust that the author will meet with a generous encouragement and success.—GEO. E. DAVENPORT.

SOUTHERN PLANTS.—Mr. A. H. Curtiss, of Jacksonville, Florida, proposes to issue sets of dried plants of the Southern United States, in installments or fascicles of 250 species each. Several sets of the first fascicle have been sent to us, and are deposited here, and one of them is now being added to this Herbarium. I wish to say that the specimens are so well selected, so ample and complete, so well named—all with full printed labels in neat form—that it is a pleasure to look at them, and that I consider them very cheap indeed at the price fixed, namely \$20 for 250 species.—ASA GRAY
Herbarium of Harvard University.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INDEX TO NORTH AMERICAN BOTANY, by Sereno Watson. Part I. Polypetalæ.—This has long been a sadly needed work, and Mr. Watson has gone through an amount of necessary labor for the benefit of botanists for which we can never be too grateful. The Botany west of the Mississippi is especially scattered and very few have access to books that can enable them to trace up the authorities and synonymy of all of our western plants. This work meets the trouble exactly, brings together all these scattered references and enables the botanist of the humblest means to possess the names, synonymy and authorities of all the species of North American plants. To keep pace with the changes that are being made in names is important, and we would advise all of our contributors to send for the work at once and then some will find out that the names they sometimes send us have gone out of date long ago. The work is published by the Smithsonian Institution and the price is fixed at \$2.00 not half the cost. Copies can be had for that price by applying to Sereno Watson, Cambridge, Mass., Herbarium of Harvard University. The Polypetalæ of North America sum up as follows: Orders, 69; Genera, 545; Species, 3,038.

BOTANICAL CONTRIBUTIONS, by Asa Gray. This is No. 25 of these Contributions by Dr. Gray and we hope that the good work will go on for many years to come. It is divided into four parts. Part 1 is upon American *Helutines*. Instead of a single species of *Helutina* it seems that we have four: *H. triandra*, Schkuhr., *H. Americana*, Arn., *H. brachymerma*, n. sp., and *H. Californica*, n. sp. Part 2 contains the descriptions of two new genera of *Acnuthaceæ*, named *Carlnerightia* and *Gatesia*. The former is represented by two species, found in Texas and Arizona; the latter by one species which ranges from Northern Alabama and Southern Tennessee to Eastern Texas. Part 3 is devoted to the description of new *Astragalii*. We always expect a liberal share of this genus and we are not disappointed, for Dr. Gray here adds 17 new species. Part 4 contains "Miscellanæ," being a description of various new species. Dr. Parry describes a *Boyskinia*, and Dr. T. C. Porter, an *Actinella*, to which Dr. Gray adds a new species in each of the following genera: *Galium*, *Aster*, *Erigeron*, *Luphaminia*, *Actinella*, and *Arnica*.